/1000 cont./

643 On the basis of population, the Yamana were and are a small nation. In spite of everything, they lack a common head, whether we mean by this a person who through heredity or election is provided with special sovereign power, or one who has earned a dominant position as a result of sacerdotal or sorcerous activity, or one who is superior to his nearest kin, such as the first-born of a patriarchal extended family. /1001/ The influence which a tjámuna occasionally achieves is a certain moral prerogative resulting from personal virtues.

631 Again, it was the given geographical facts which divided the country of the Yamana into five districts and, on the basis of this, the people as a whole into five tribal groups (p. 199 /untranslated/). Since these groups live more or less strictly apart from one another, certain peculiarities of speech and living habits have developed in the course of time. These are the factors which easily and naturally distinguish each group. Obviously this tribal division is purely external because it is spatially conditioned. Within each of the five large dialect groups geographical conditions have brought about further division into local groups (p. 629) which, in turn, are made up of a few kinship groups. The relations of the individual families in each of the latter are very close and firm; these families regularly and frequently have social intercourse with one another.

183 The above-mentioned organization of the Yamana people as a whole is a loose one and largely external, since unification under a common head is lacking. Nevertheless, fixed rules, with unavoidable obligations for everyone, determine the social intercourse of the divisions mentioned and of individual persons. They ensure coexistence without friction and a well-ordered social life. In an extremely simple society like that of our Yamana one might find it astonishing that there are certain arrangements to regulate intercourse with others, and, even more surprising, that they have subjective value and are successful and dependable. They guarantee, above all, the stability of the individual family and the harmonious coexistence of its members. Their vital significance stems from the fact that the unity of the whole ethnic group rests on the individual family as the single definitely determined social structure. They therefore protect and support many thoroughly effective general rules.